

Introduction to the Philosophy of Human Person

Quarter 1 – Module 11: The Human Persons in their Environment

Lesson

11

Demonstration of the Virtues of Prudence and Frugality towards Environments



What's New

Moral Choice

Moral choice is an exercise of one's freewill guided by reason in choosing what is good. For Thomas and Aristotle, the importance of moral choice is to achieve complete happiness (Ferrari, 2017) because making a wrong choice will make us suffer which is the opposite of happiness.

Activity 3. A. Do those who think that the bad things benefit know that the bad things are bad? Explain your answer.



What is It

Prudence towards the Environment

Moral choice requires prudence, it is Aristotle's "practical wisdom" – it is practical wisdom because it is something that you have to do with an understanding and certainty that it will bring you happiness (Ferrari, 2017).

It is clear that those who desire bad things are those who don't know what they are, but they desire what they thought were good whereas they really are bad; so those who do not know what they are, but think they are good, clearly desire the good (Plato, 2015). So they become miserable.

In general terms, prudence means "the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason" (www.merriam-webster.com). For example, you don't buy what you don't need like non-essentials during the pandemic such as expensive stuff like gadgets, clothes or shoes.

In philosophy, prudence is a virtue which implies knowledge of the ultimate end of human life which is happiness (Ferrari, 2017), including the truth, goodness and beauty. To attain the ultimate end must regulate the means, that's prudence.

For example,

If you believe that education is your way to attain happiness, truth, goodness and beauty, you have to work hard, be self-determined, be persevering in studying. If not, you will fail.

In other words, prudence means "right reason applied to action" (Ferrari, 2017). We commonly hear it as thinking before acting.

Prudence also means having “the norm of actions to be performed” (Ferrari, 2017). For example, disposing of garbage properly.

Prudence as a virtue remind us “to act wisely and effectively within environmental conflicts” (Ferrari, 2017). Prudence is related in our duty and responsibility to care for nature.

Prudence may “imply the acceptance of human vulnerability [kahinaan ang tao]” and it means that prudence is a virtue for a human person who is “humbly aware of the network of relationships that connect him/her, firstly through their own body, to their physical environment and ultimately to the Earth” (Ferrari, 2017).

Prudence is not only about “the private good of the individual, but also the common good of the multitude” based on Thomas’ philosophical analysis following Aristotle (Ferrari, 2017).

The common good refers to the welfare of the community.

We have to prudently seek for “the sustainable connection of humankind to nature, as the ultimate source of economic wealth and human welfare itself. In this way, (economic) prudence becomes a guide to a wise, sustainable use of natural resources and, much more, to the acknowledgement and appreciation of nature’s inherent worth” (Ferrari, 2017).

As for Thomas, following Aristotle, “prudence manifests itself in its true nature and completeness, as the virtue whose object is the common good, only in those who are able not only to guide themselves, but also other people within the political community” (Ferrari, 2017).

Frugality towards the Environment

“The heart is great which shows moderation in the midst of prosperity.”
- (Lucius Annaeus Seneca, c. 4 BC–AD 65)

Frugality, in general terms, it means “careful management of material resources and especially money” (www.merriam-webster.com).

Frugality is “a principle emphasized to avoid over-consumption and consequently the depletion of natural resources” (An option being recommended by the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology) (Roiland, 2016).

Frugality is advocated in religion as a path towards God; in the moral sense as a virtue to be cultivated in human persons; in terms of pursuing well-being as a source of happiness and in aesthetic as an artistic importance (Westacott, 2016, quoted from Muradian, 2019). Socrates says that wisdom is virtue (Plato, 2015). Virtue is about goodness. So wisdom is something that makes a person good.

Why Live a Frugal Lifestyle (Muradian, Roldan. 2019)

- It's a source of "good living;"
- There's a need for the long-term maintenance of earthly ecological conditions and reaching fairer global relations in terms of utilization of natural resources and disposal of waste.

Frugality as a Choice

- From a capability perspective - the freedom to choose to live a frugal life is when it is not due to low income, kind of work or the country where you live (Sen, 1999);
- You have enough resources that you can choose to be frugal.

Frugality as a Socio-economic Condition

- Being frugal because you are poor (e.g., you lack food, no decent shelter, etc.) and you have no choice.

Voluntary simplicity encourages us to reduce the "busyness" in our lives so that we may live more simply and in accord with the innate flows and rhythms of the natural world (Esbjorn-Hargens and Zimmerman, 2011).

Immanuel Kant considers "frugality as a way to happiness and simplicity as the order of nature" (Herstatt and Tiwari, 2017).

Kant teaches the virtue of frugality based on free choice and rational thinking: "The state of the individual who is satisfied because he does not know the amenities is one of simple frugality, while the state of the individual who knows them but voluntarily dispenses with them because he fears to unrest to which they give rise, is one of wise frugality" (Herstatt and Tiwari, 2017).

For E. F. Schumacher (1973), it means a philosophy of "enoughness" by simplifying desires (Herstatt and Tiwari, 2017).

Frugality is a global good, "a necessary condition for global sustainability and intergenerational justice" in the world of the twenty-first century. Frugality is then promoted as an ideal, a lifestyle based on "low material consumption and a simple lifestyle" (Bouckaert et al., 2008, quoted from Herstatt and Tiwari, 2017).